

Message Text

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16

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 /070 W

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R 231030Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1719

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB MU IN

SUBJECT: INDIAN EXPATRIATE LABOR PROBLEMS IN OMAN

REF: NEW DELHI A-191 OF MAY 30, 1975

1. EMBOFF DISCUSSED INDIAN EXPATRIATE LABOR PROBLEMS IN OMAN WITH INDIAN CONSUL PREM MEHRA. MEHRA NOTED THAT HARDSHIP CASES INVOLVING INDIAN EXPATRIATES INCREASING AND THAT HE IS NOW BESIEGED WITH "THOUSANDS" OF SUHY CASES WITH EXPATRIATES OFTEN BEING SHIPPED HOME AT INDIAN GOVERNMENT EXPENSE.

2. ONE REASON FOR RISE IN LABOR DIFFICULTIES IS DOUBLING OF NUMBER OF INDIAN WORKERS IN OMAN OVER LAST FEW YEARS. THERE ARE NOW OVER 20,000 INDIANS WORKING IN OMAN, RANGING FROM DOCTORS, NURSES, TECHNICIANS, AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF TO SKILLED AND UNSKILLED WORKERS; MAJORITY WORK IN CONSTRUCTION CAMPS. MEHRA NOTED THAT WHILE LARGE CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES

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GENERALLY FAIR TO INDIAN WORKERS AND PAY THEM GOOD WAGES,

MANY SMALLER CONTRACTORS DO NOT PAY THEIR INDIAN EMPLOYEES FOR WEEKS OR PAY LESS THAN WAS PROMISED.

3. FRAUDULENT RECRUITING FOR JOBS IN GULF IS CAUSE OF MANY INDIANS ARRIVING HERE WITHOUT CONTRACT OR REAL JOB OFFER. ACCORDING TO MEHRA, GOI ABLE SCREEN OUT WORKERS TRAVELING BY AIR TO OMAN WHO DO NOT HAVE MINIMUM AMOUNT OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE OR GUARANTEED JOB. HOWEVER, MANY STEERAGE PASSENGERS ON VESSELS GOING FROM INDIA TO MUSCAT ARE VIRTUALLY PENNILESS, LACK ANY SORT OF SAFEGUARDS, AND ARE SOMETIMES TRAVELING ILLEGALLY WITHOUT PROPER PAPERS. THESE STEERAGE PASSENGERS ARE OFTEN UNEMPLOYED FROM TIME THEY SET FOOT IN OMAN.

4. INDIAN EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE OMANGOV HAS BEEN VERY HELPFUL IN RESOLVING THESE PROBLEMS. MEHRA BELIEVES THAT MANY OMANIS, INCLUDING OFFICIALS, ARE PREJUDICED AGAINST INDIANS AND WOULD LIKE RESTRICT NUMBER OF INDIAN WORKERS HERE. THIS PARTICULARLY APPARENT RE TECHNICIANS, DOCTORS, AND SKILLED WORKERS WHO COMPETE WITH OMANIS FOR DESIRABLE JOBS. (COMMENT: OIL COMPANY MANAGERS INFORMED US OMANGOV INSTRUCTED THEM PLACE MORE OMANIS IN STAFF POSITIONS TO DETRIMENT OF SKILLED INDIAN AND PAKISTANI MANAGERS AND ADMINISTRATORS WHO NOT ALLOWED RISE TO SENIOR POSITIONS. END COMMENT.) MEHRA ACCUSED OMANGOV LABOR BOARD OF DOING LITTLE OR NOTHING TO PROTECT INDIAN WORKERS FROM EXPLOITATION.

5. GOI AND INDIAN EMBASSY SO FAR HAVE NOT REGISTERED OFFICIAL CONCERN WITH OMANGOV ON STATUS OF INDIAN EXPATRIATES. MEHRA REMARKED THAT BENEFITS TO INDIA OF TRADE WITH GULF STATES OBVIOUSLY OUTWEIGH PROBLEMS AFFECTING FEW THOUSAND INDIAN NATIONALS. INDIAN EMBASSY DECIDED INSTEAD TO LOBBY FOR TOUGHER REGULATIONS GOVERNING INDIAN EMIGRATION TO MIDDLE EAST. WOLLE

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